

House
REPUBLICAN
Conference

FloorPrep

Legislative Digest

Monday, October 4, 1999

J.C. Watts, Jr.
Chairman
4th District, Oklahoma

*House Meets at 12:30 p.m. for Morning Hour and
2:00 p.m. for Legislative Business
(No Votes Before 6:00 p.m.)*

Anticipated Floor Action:

H.R. 782—Older Americans Act Amendments

H.R. 2607—Commercial Space Transportation Competitiveness Act

H.R. 356—Conveying Land from NASA to Stanislaus County, California

**H.Res. 57—Expressing Concern Over Interference With Political Freedom
in Peru**

**H.Res. 181—Condemning the Murder of Americans by the Revolutionary
Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC)**

**H.R. 1794—Advocating That Taiwan Be Admitted to the World Health
Organization**

H.R. 1451—Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission Act

S. 1606—Extending Chapter 12 of the Bankruptcy Code for Nine Months

H.R. 2401—U.S. Holocaust Assets Commission Extension Act

H.R. 2681—Rail Passenger Disaster Family Assistance Act

H.Con.Res. 171—Congratulating the American Public Transit Association

S. 559—Designating the J.J. Pickle Federal Building

**Motion to Go to Conference on H.R. 2684 (FY 2000 VA/HUD
Appropriations Act)**

**Motion to Go to Conference on H.R. 2466 (FY 2000 Interior
Appropriations Act)**

H.R. 2606—FY 2000 Foreign Operations Appropriations (Conference Report)



Bills Considered Under Suspension of the Rules

Floor Situation: The House will consider the following 12 bills under suspension of the rules as its first order of business today. Each is debatable for 40 minutes, may not be amended, and requires a two-thirds majority vote for passage.

H.R. 782—Older Americans Act Amendments amends the 1965 Older Americans Act to reauthorize \$1.6 billion in FY 2000 and such sums as necessary through FY 2004 for (1) the Administration on Aging; (2) grants for Native American Programs on Aging; (3) grants for state and community programs on aging including nutrition services and family caregiver programs; (4) state long-term care ombudsman programs and elder abuse prevention programs; and (5) senior community service employment programs. CBO estimates that enactment will result in outlays of \$7.6 billion over the FY 2000-2004 period assuming adjustments for inflation. The Education & the Workforce Committee reported H.R. 782 by voice vote on September 15, 1999. The bill was introduced by Mr. Barrett (NE) on February 23, 1999.

H.R. 2607—Commercial Space Transportation Competitiveness Act authorizes a total of \$31.4 million for the Transportation Department's Office of the Associate Administrator for Commercial Space Transportation for FYs 1999-2002. The Commercial Space Transportation Office licenses commercial launch and reentry vehicles to ensure public safety.

The measure also authorizes \$1.7 million for the Commerce Department's Office of Space Commercialization for FYs 2000-2002. The Space Commercialization Office gathers information on the commercial space industry. The bill requires office to submit a report to Congress on its activities, functions, and participation in interagency efforts within 90 days of enactment. In addition, the measure extends the office's indemnification until December 31, 2004. Companies must purchase \$500 million in insurance for third-party liability (other than the government or the company), but the government indemnifies claims between \$500 million and \$2 billion.

The bill requires the Transportation Secretary to submit a report to Congress on the liability risk-sharing regime for commercial space transportation. Finally, the measure requires the Comptroller General, the NASA Administrator, and U.S. commercial space industry providers and customers to submit to Congress a report on the impact of the FY 2000 VA/HUD Appropriations Act on future development of the U.S. commercial space industry. A CBO cost estimate was unavailable at press time. The bill was introduced by Mr. Rohrabacher and was discharged by the Science Committee on October 1, 1999.

H.R. 356—Conveying Land from NASA to Stanislaus County, California directs the administrator of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) to convey approximately 1,528 acres of land in Stanislaus County, California to the county. The land is currently known as the NASA Ames Research Center and the Crows Landing Facility. This conveyance includes all improvements on the land. NASA no longer needs the land and has approved the conveyance; however, the bill allows NASA to retain the right to use the property for aviation activities. CBO estimates that implementing H.R. 356 will result in the loss of \$5 million in offsetting receipts from the sale of surplus property in FY 2002. The bill affects direct spending, so pay-as-you-go procedures apply. The bill was introduced by Mr. Condit and was reported by the Science Committee by voice vote on September 9, 1999.

H.Res. 57—Expressing Concern Over Interference With Political Freedom in Peru expresses the sense of Congress that the erosion of the independence of the judicial and electoral branches of the government of Peru, along with the intimidation of journalists within the country, are matters of great

concern, and that the U.S. should pursue an independent investigation and report by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights of the Organization of American States on threats to freedom and judicial independence in that country. The resolution was introduced by Mr. Gilman *et al.* and was reported by the International Relations Committee on July 1.

H.Res. 181—Condemning the Murder of Americans by the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Columbia (FARC) condemns the kidnapping and murder of three United States citizens, Ingrid Washinawatok, Terence Freitas, and Lahe'ena'e Gay. These American activists were involved in humanitarian efforts to assist the U'wa people of northeastern Columbia. Prior to their kidnapping, they spent two weeks on the U'wa reservation trying to assist in developing education program using traditional culture, language, and religion. On February 25, 1999, members of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Columbia (FARC) kidnapped the Americans off a bus heading to the airport and later beat and murdered them. Their bodies, found eight days after their kidnapping, were discovered in Venezuela about 30 yards from the border to Columbia. The death of Ingrid Washinawatok marks the first time that a Native North American woman died doing human rights work among native people in South America. The resolution was introduced by Mr. Green (WI) *et al.* and was reported by the International Relations Committee by voice vote on September 23.

H.R. 1794—Advocating that Taiwan Be Admitted to the World Health Organization (WHO) orders the Secretary of State to report to Congress no later than January 1, 2000, on the fulfillment of a commitment to actively support Taiwan's participation in international organizations, particularly the World Health Organization (WHO). In the 1994 Taiwan Policy Review, the U.S. agreed to support the inclusion of Taiwan in international organizations such as the WHO. A CBO cost estimate was unavailable at press time. The bill was introduced by Mr. Brown (OH) *et al.* and was reported by the International Relations Committee by voice vote on July 1.

H.R. 1451—Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission Act establishes a nine-member commission to research and recommend appropriate activities to commemorate the 200th anniversary of Abraham Lincoln's birth in 2009. The members of the commission will be selected by the president, the Senate majority leader, and the Speaker of the House. The bill requires the committee to study such activities as (1) minting a Lincoln bicentennial penny, (2) issuing a bicentennial postage stamp, (3) celebrating his life through formal events at the Lincoln Memorial, (4) convening a joint session of Congress for appropriate ceremonies, and (5) acquiring and preserving Lincoln artifacts. The commission must report its recommendations to Congress within four years. A CBO cost estimate was unavailable at press time. The bill was introduced by Mr. LaHood *et al.* and was reported by the Government Reform Committee by voice vote on September 30, 1999.

S. 1606—Extending Chapter 12 of the Bankruptcy Code grants a nine-month extension (starting on October 1, 1999) to Chapter 12 of the bankruptcy code, which is set to expire on September 31, 1999. Congress extended the law last fall in the 1998 omnibus appropriations bill (*P.L. 105-277*). Chapter 12, first enacted in 1986 in response to the farm financial crisis of the early- and mid-1980s (the most severe since the 1920s), is a specialized form of bankruptcy relief available to family farmers. It permits eligible family farmers to reorganize their debts instead of liquidate their assets. A CBO cost estimate was unavailable at press time. The Senate passed the bill by unanimous consent on September 30, 1999. The House passed a similar measure (H.R. 2942) to extend Chapter 12 for six months by voice vote on September 27.

H.R. 2401—U.S. Holocaust Assets Commission Act extends by one year (from December 31, 1999 to December 31, 2000) the deadline for the U.S. Presidential Advisory Holocaust Assets Commission to issue its final report to the president. The bill also authorizes the commission to receive an additional \$2.5 million to cover expenses for the additional year. Congress established the Holocaust Assets Commission (*P.L. 105-186*) last year to (1) study and develop a historical record of the collection and disposition of specified assets of Holocaust victims if they came into the possession or control of the federal government, including the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System or any Federal Reserve bank, at any time after January 30, 1933; (2) coordinate its activities with those of private and governmental entities; (3) review research conducted by other entities regarding such assets in the U.S.; and (4) report its recommendations to the president. The commission requested an additional year to complete its work due to the unexpected volume and complexity of the material it needs to examine. A CBO cost estimate was unavailable at press time. The bill was introduced by Mr. Lazio *et al.* and was not considered by a committee.

H.R. 2681—Rail Passenger Disasters Family Assistance Act establishes a formal system to provide assistance to families of those involved in rail passenger accidents. It applies only to those accidents within the United States involving interstate inter-city rail carriers or intrastate high-speed rail carriers, but not those involving tourist, historic, or excursion rail carriers. The bill directs the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) to assign a director of family support services to assist the families of passengers involved in the accidents, including serving as a contact person in the federal government and acting as a liaison between the families and the rail carrier. The bill also requires the NTSB to designate a nonprofit organization to provide counseling and other support to the families. Specifically, the third party duties will include offering mental health and counseling services to the families, providing for an area where families can grieve in private, and arranging memorial services with the families of the deceased. CBO estimates that enactment will have no significant impact on federal spending. The bill was introduced by Mr. Shuster *et al.* and was reported by the Transportation & Infrastructure Committee by a vote of 22-5 on August 5, 1999.

H.Con.Res. 171 expresses the sense of Congress to congratulate the American Public Transit Association for 25 years of commendable service to the transit industry and the nation. The APTA was established on October 17, 1974, when the American Transit Association and the Institute for Rapid Transit merged, but its roots are connected to the American Street Railway Association, which was formed in 1882. The APTA members provide safe and efficient transit services in the U.S. and Canada. Members include bus, rapid transit, and commuter rail systems, and the organizations responsible for planning, building, financing, and operating transit systems. Ninety-five percent of passengers who use transit in the U.S. and Canada are carried by APTA members. The resolution was introduced by Mr. Shuster *et al.* and was reported by the Transportation & Infrastructure Committee by voice vote on September 13.

S. 559 designates the federal building located at 300 East 8th Street in Austin, Texas, as the J.J. ‘Jake’ Pickle Federal Building. Mr. Pickle served his constituents for 30 years in the House of Representatives. He was born and raised in Texas and served in the United States Navy during World War II. He was elected to an open seat in Congress in 1963 and continued his service for 15 terms. Congressman Pickle was a leader in the fight for civil rights issues and equal opportunity for women and minorities. During his tenure, he became chairman of both the Ways & Means Oversight and Social Security Subcommittees. The Senate passed the bill by unanimous consent on June 16, 1999; the House passed an identical measure by voice vote (H.R. 118) on May 4.

Additional Information: See *Legislative Digest*, Vol. XXVIII, #28, October 1, 1999.



Motion to Go to Conference on H.R. 2684 (FY 2000 VA/HUD Appropriations Act)

Floor Situation: Mr. Walsh or a designee is expected to offer a motion to go to conference on H.R. 2684 sometime today. A motion to instruct may be made immediately after this request and before the chair appoints conferees. Instructions are considered the prerogative of the minority and are debatable for one hour.

Summary: The motion, if agreed to, will establish a House-Senate conference to resolve differences between H.R. 2684, which passed the House by a vote of 235-187 on September 9, 1999, and the Senate version, which passed by voice vote on September 24, 1999. Once agreed to, the motion permits the chair to appoint conferees. Details of a possible motion to instruct were unavailable at press time.

Views: The Republican leadership strongly supports the motion to go to conference and opposes any motion to instruct conferees that would weaken the position of House negotiators.

Additional Information: See *Legislative Digest*, Vol. XXVIII, #24, September 3, 1999.



Motion to Go to Conference on H.R. 2466 (FY 2000 Interior Appropriations Act)

Floor Situation: Mr. Regula or a designee is expected to offer a motion to go to conference on H.R. 2466 sometime today. A motion to instruct may be made immediately after this request and before the chair appoints conferees. Instructions are considered the prerogative of the minority and are debatable for one hour.

Summary: The motion, if agreed to, will establish a House-Senate conference to resolve differences between H.R. 2466, which passed the House by a vote of 377-47 on July 14, 1999, and the Senate version, which passed by a vote of 89-10 on September 23, 1999. Once agreed to, the motion permits the chair to appoint conferees. Details of a possible motion to instruct were unavailable at press time.

Views: The Republican leadership strongly supports the motion to go to conference and opposes any motion to instruct conferees that would weaken the position of House negotiators.

Additional Information: See *Legislative Digest*, Vol. XXVIII, #20, July 9, 1999.



H.R. 2606—FY 2000 Foreign Operations Appropriations (Conference Report)

Floor Situation: The House may consider the conference report to H.R. 2606 after it appoints conferees on H.R. 2466. Conference reports are privileged and may be considered anytime three days after they are filed; they are debatable for one hour and may not be amended. On Tuesday, September 28, the Rules Committee granted a rule waiving all points of order against the conference report and its consideration.

Summary: The conference report to H.R. 2606 appropriates \$12.7 billion in discretionary budget authority in FY 2000 for foreign assistance and export-financing programs. This amount is \$69.2 million more than the House-passed bill and \$20.6 billion less than last year (although the FY 1999 amount included \$2.1 billion in emergency spending and \$17.9 billion for the International Monetary Fund). Of the total amount appropriated, the measure provides \$599 million for export assistance, \$7.5 billion for bilateral economic assistance, \$3.5 billion for military assistance, and \$1.1 billion for multilateral economic assistance.

Major funding initiatives in the conference report include:

- * \$2.7 billion for the Agency for International Development (AID), \$48.6 million more than the House-passed bill;
- * \$3.4 billion for foreign military financing (\$50 million less than the House-passed bill);
- * \$78 million for voluntary peacekeeping operations (\$1.5 million more than the House-passed bill);
- * \$535 million for Eastern Europe and the Baltic States, including \$150 million for Kosovo (\$142 million more than the House-passed bill);
- * \$735 million for the former states of the Soviet Union (\$10 million more than the House-passed bill);
- * \$715 million (\$30 million more than the House-passed bill) for child survival and disease elimination activities;
- * \$19.6 million for the International Fund for Ireland, equal to the House-passed bill;
- * \$285 million (equal to the House-passed bill) for International Narcotics Control;
- * \$181.6 million (\$30,000 less than the House-passed bill) for nonproliferation, anti-terrorism, and demining activities; and
- * \$235 million (\$5 million less than the House-passed bill) for the Peace Corps.

The conference report also:

- * recommends no less than \$960 million for economic aid to Israel and no less than \$735 million in aid to Egypt;

- * withholds 50 percent of assistance provided for the government of Russia unless it ends nuclear and ballistic missile cooperation with Iran;
- * renews for one-year the partial waiver of section 907 of the Freedom Support Act (*P.L. 102-511*), which bans all U.S. assistance to Azerbaijan;
- * provides \$35.8 million for the Global Environment Facility (GEF), \$14.2 million less than the House-passed bill;
- * caps funding for bilateral family planning assistance at \$385 million and releases it on a monthly basis of 8.3 percent a month over twelve months; and
- * provides \$25 million for U.S. contributions to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), but reduces that amount on a dollar-by-dollar basis for any amounts UNFPA spends on activities in China.

The House passed H.R. 2606 by a vote of 385-35 on August 3, 1999. The Senate approved its version (S. 1234) by a vote of 97-2 on June 30, 1999.

Additional Information: See *Legislative Digest*, Vol. XXVIII, #27, Pt. III, September 29, 1999; and #22, July 23, 1999.



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